

The Province of the United States of America recommends to our fraternal prayers our dear brother, **JOSEPH (WASY) WASIELEWSKI**, who died in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary on May 31, 2008, in Cupertino, California, in the 91st year of his age and the 71st year of his religious profession.

Bro. Joe was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on November 15, 1917, to Boleslaus and Cecelia (Kantarski) Wasielewski. He was taught by Marianists at St. James elementary school in Baltimore. One of his teachers had trouble pronouncing his last name and shortened it to "Wasy." The name stuck, despite his mother's protests. Bro. Joe's admiration for his Marianist teachers inspired him to enter the postulate of the Society of Mary at age 14. His class was the first to complete four years of high school in the Marianist postulate at Beacon, N.Y.

Bro. Joe's novitiate was spent at Mount St. John in Dayton. He professed first vows in 1937 and perpetual vows in 1943 at Mount St. John. Bro. Joe attended one year of scholasticate at Mount St. John and the University of Dayton and was assigned a teaching position. The assignment changed his plans for college but did not deter him from earning a degree. After 10 years of summer sessions, he completed his bachelor's degree in education in 1947 from the University of Dayton.

In 1938, Bro. Joe began what would become a nearly 60-year career in education. Throughout the next two decades, he taught at a number of elementary and secondary schools, including St. John's Home for Boys in Brooklyn, Holy Rosary in Dayton, St. James High School in San Francisco, Cathedral School in Honolulu, Junipero Serra High School in Gardena, California, and St. Anthony in Maui.

As an elementary school teacher, he taught all subjects. On the high school level, he taught English, history and religion. Passionate about sports, and particularly basketball, Bro. Joe coached several teams. At Cathedral School, his basketball team captured the league championship four years in a row.

Bro. Joe began his longest and favorite assignment in 1959, when he was the first Marianist missionary from the former Marianist Province of the Pacific to be sent to Japan. He spent the next 37 years at St. Joseph College in Yokohama, where he served as an elementary school teacher and principal, and assistant high school principal. He also was the basketball coach and athletic moderator. "I took the risk, and God was with me," Bro. Joe said of the opportunity.

At St. Joseph, Bro. Joe was a respected and revered educator, known for his exactness in teaching grammar and writing and his droll humor. According to Bro. Jim Dods, Bro. Joe often repeated two statements to his students: "When the going gets tough, the tough get going," and "Pooh, pooh, perouh," when he thought they were bending the truth regarding homework. "I appreciated the kindness he extended to me when I was a young brother learning the ropes of teaching," said Bro. Jim.

Bro. Ken Thompson, who worked with Bro. Joe in Japan, said he really connected with his students. “Joe had a nice way with the Japanese children,” said Bro. Ken. “He was a big, burly guy, but he didn’t let little things bother him. The children really liked him. He was a ‘big, jolly giant.’”

Bro. Joe returned to the United States in 1996 and joined the Marianist Hall community in Honolulu. Fellow community member Fr. Bill O’Connell said Bro. Joe never hesitated to try something new. “He was in his eighties and knew nothing about computers, but it didn’t stop him from learning,” said Fr. Bill. “He became quite proficient.”

In 2001, Bro. Joe moved to the Marianist community in Cupertino, Calif., where he corresponded regularly with alumni and parents from years past, especially those from Japan. Bro. Joe also enjoyed playing the harmonica, meditation, reciting his rosary and spiritual reading. Reflecting on his life in Cupertino, Bro Joe said, “This is a community where brothers share each other’s lives...a place where real family spirit is found.”

That family spirit carried him through the celebration of his 70th anniversary as a Marianist in 2007. “I am grateful to God, to our Blessed Mother, and to St. Joseph for all my years as a Marianist,” Bro. Joe said.

May he rest in peace.

